

The Ambassador

THRU: Maxwell Chaplin, DCM

George Huey, Consul General

Argentine Police/Military authorities and Human Rights

As you know, I am Secretary of a luncheon club called the "Mesa de los Miercoles" which meets each first and third Wednesday of the month. Requirements for membership are that the officer have attained the rank of Counselor of Embassy or, if of a lesser rank, acts as Charge during the absence of the Ambassador. There are 43 members representing 32 countries.

At our meeting Wednesday May 19, 1976 there were 15 members attending representing 12- countries and the discussion centered around the subject matter under reference. 4 of the countries have had or have ongoing problems, the U.K., Australia, France and Sweden. (Then Germans were mentioned as also having problems but were not represented at the lunch).

There was a general consensus that the treatment being accorded prisoners by the Argentine arresting authorities if brought to light would give the Argentine government an image equally as bad as that of Chile and that it was only a matter of time before this occurred. All officers in the discussion were unanimous that the Argentines in every instance of arrest had failed to comply with their obligations under article 36 of the Vienna Convention. In addition they were less than helpful and often obstructive in gaining access to nationals detained. All had experienced denials by the police/military that a national was being held when in fact the diplomatic officer knew that to be untrue.

Mistreatment of prisoners by the Argentine authorities was a matter of concern to all diplomats present whether or not they had a national detained.

It- was recommended by the group that the matters under discussion be brought to the attention of the President by the Papal Nuncio as soon as he returned in early June backed by the entire diplomatic association.

Countries represented at the luncheon were the U.S., U.K., Australia, France, Norway, S.Africa, Finland, Sweden, Greece, U.S.S.R., Philippines, and Bulgaria.

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